

**Town of West Hartford
Human Rights Commission
Mission Statement**

"The West Hartford Human Rights Commission fosters mutual understanding and respect among people, and encourages equality of treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, civil union status, gender identity or expression, marital status, familial status, genetic information, age, economic status, lawful source of income, national origin or ancestry, or present or past history of physical, mental, intellectual or learning disability including, but not limited to blindness."

**Town of West Hartford
Human Rights Commission
West Hartford Town Hall
7:00 p.m.
Tuesday, September 5, 2017
Room 217**

Minutes

Attendance

Judith Borden, Chair	Present
Charles Cleary, Secretary	Present
Denise Jackson-Riley	Present
Pramod Prahan, Administrative Liaison	Present
Sarah Raskin	Present
Barry Walters	Present
Judith Wyman Kelly	Present

Three was one member of the public in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 pm by Judy Borden. Judy B. motioned that the June 6th meeting minutes be approved, and Judy K. seconded.

Judy B. reported that she had finished reading the book selected for One Book, One Town. The selection is *Of Beetles & Angels* by Mawi Asgedom. She said it is a wonderful book, and she will bring it to the next meeting. Pramod reported that the adult book is *Thunderdog*, about a 9/11 rescue dog. The children's book is *Keep Your Ear on the Ball*.

Judy B. reported she will be away for the Park Road Parade, being held Saturday, October 7th. Judy K. talked to the schools about students marching with the commission. Judy K. has the banner, which she'll bring to the parade. Pramod reported that the library is not marching this year.

The commission had set a goal this year of asking the mayor for a proclamation for World Aids Day. Barry said there was not a lot to report yet. Barry said the focus of World AIDS Day has shifted from focusing on yesterday to focusing on those living with AIDS, celebrating their triumphs & recognizing their challenges. There has been a speaker on the steps of the State Capitol. Ideas were suggested of sponsoring a speaker, or hosting a movie. Sarah said there may be resources she could access at Trinity College.

Human Rights Day is Sunday, December 10th. Judy K. reported that the elementary schools are required to participate in Human Rights Day activities. Last year Judy had provided the schools with resources. She volunteered to follow up with schools to make sure they are engaged. Pramod reported that the Commission on Human Rights & Opportunities (CHRO) would be happy to do a presentation on human rights. Judy K. suggested asking the schools & library to collaborate in requesting the petition from the mayor. Sarah suggested using the town email to get the word out. Pramod said that Facebook has been effective in reaching a large audience. Judy K. said one idea was for the trifold to be handed out, but the Commission had not approved.

Judy K. reported that she is on the planning committee for Martin Luther King Day.

Sarah reported that she had referred a member of the Working Families Party as a possible replacement for Commissioner Andrews. The slot must be filled by a party other than Democrat.

Judy B. reported that Essie had informed her that commission members should not be having long email discussions via email. This could be a violation for Freedom of Information laws. No conclusions or decisions can be made via email. If there is a topic requiring intensive discussion, a special meeting should be called.

Chuck reported that the state discrimination laws had changed. Veteran status was now a protected class. He asked that the mission statement be updated to reflect the new change. Judy K. motioned, and Barry seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

A discussion followed about undocumented residents. Sarah reported that the resolution approved by the Commission had not yet appeared on the Town Council agenda. Pramod reported that the library has started putting information on its website under the heading 'immigrant resources. He distributed a handout with screenshots of the webpage.

On Monday, September 18th ab Memories of Migration Viewing Party will be held at the Faxon Library branch at 6:30 p.m. with immigrants from Nepal, Portugal & Russia talking about their experiences. Pramod encouraged commissioners to attend & get the word out.

Judy B. asked for an update on the City of Compassion. Chuck & Barry reported that they had met with Town Council member Ben Wenograd. He said there was interest in it, and offered some suggestions. Barry will reach out to Ben to see the status. Judy B. reported that NPR had done a story about the Charter and encouraged Commissioners to listen to it.

It was noted that the Commission's next meeting on November 7th coincides with election night. Commissioners agreed to move the meeting from November 7th to November 14th. Chuck will reserve the room.

Announcements

- Judy K. announced she is working to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Anyone interested in this should contact her. Judy reported that there's a lot of interest in Greater Hartford about the use of symbols & tradition.
- Sarah reported that the National March for Racial Justice will take place Sunday, October 1st.
- A Women's Convocation will take place at the end of October. Sarah will send more information via email.

With no further business, Judy K. moved to adjourn at 8:25 p.m. Barry seconded.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chuck Cleary
October 8, 2017